



Legislation Text

File #: AR-17-346, Version: 1

TAMRMS#: B06

Ballot Questions

Presented by: Chris Belke, Chief Legislative Officer

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council Motion CM-17-045 be amended by deleting the three questions in their entirety and replacing them with the following:

Question 1: Community Branch Library (including detailed design and purchase of land)

Do you support the City constructing a **Branch Library** in the next 4 years?

Estimated construction cost (accuracy +/- 50%): \$19.5 million

Estimated annual operating cost (accuracy +/- 10%): \$1.259 million

Estimated total tax increase: 3.0%

Question 2: Arena Facility (including detailed design)

Do you support the City constructing a **Single Sheet Arena Ice Rink at Servus Place** in the next 4 years?

Estimated construction cost (accuracy +/- 50%): \$20.5 million

Estimated annual operating cost (accuracy +/- 10%): \$279,000

Estimated total tax increase 2.1%

Question 3: Aquatics Facility (including detailed design)

Do you support the City constructing a **pool expansion at Servus Place** in the next 4 years?

Estimated construction cost (accuracy +/- 50%): \$13.7 million

Estimated annual operating cost (accuracy +/- 10%): \$310,000

Estimated total tax increase: 1.6%

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

On August 22, 2017 Mayor Crouse provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 22/2016 that he intended to bring forward the proposed motion below.

In order for Council to debate the motion, the motion must be formally moved.

Moved by Mayor Crouse

The City has in its 10 year capital plan three major capital projects. A branch library, an additional surface of ice attached to Servus Place and more aquatic space attached to Servus Place (planned to commence in 2016, 2018 and 2022 respectively). These projects are at the preliminary planning stages and the capital costs are still to be determined as well as any ongoing operating cost and associated tax increases.

The City is asking for residential input on which, if any, project to proceed with.

1. Are you in favour of the City proceeding with further planning of a branch library?

Yes _____ or No _____

2. Are you in favour of the City proceeding with further planning of a 6th sheet of ice?

Yes _____ or No _____

3. Are you in favour of the City proceeding with further planning of additional aquatic space?

Yes _____ or No _____

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To finalize the wording of ballot questions to be included on the ballot for the 2017 municipal general election on October 16, 2017.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On May 15, 2017 Council passed the following motion:

(File ID CM-17-043)

That the City has 3 separate votes on the questions on the ballot, which are:

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:

Branch Library, Building cost: \$19 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$2 million, Total estimated tax increase: 3.4% Yes _____. No _____.

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:

Single Sheet Arena Ice Rink, Building Cost: \$20.5 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$500,000, Total estimated tax increase: 1.9%. Yes _____. No _____.

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:

Aquatics Facility, Building Cost: \$24 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$1.8 million, Total Estimated Tax Increase: 3.5% Yes _____. No _____.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On May 15, 2017 Council passed the resolutions noted above to place three questions on the ballot for the 2017 municipal general election.

Since that time Administration has been reviewing the estimates included in the May 15, 2017 resolution and has reviewed the wording of the questions to be voted upon by the electors of the City.

An update of the estimates has been completed and is included in the Recommendations provided in this agenda report.

PLEASE NOTE: The estimated annual operating costs for a Community Branch Library are based on estimates of day to day operational costs for the operation of a library, as prepared by St. Albert Public Library Administration, and estimated maintenance and facility operating costs as prepared by City Administration.

The Library Board has committed to fund raising to provide \$500K of the \$19.5M required for construction of the Community Branch Library. Once confirmed, this will not form part of the borrowing cost. The \$500K does not change the tax increase.

For the Stand-Alone Pool and Arena options, the estimated costs are preliminary. They are based on consultation with other similar facilities in the Province. No detail work to determine size, scope or amenities has been completed.

Administration has also reviewed the wording of the questions and has proposed some amendments to help voters better understand the questions and cost estimates provided.

As per section 236 of the MGA, council may include a vote on a question on the ballot for a general municipal election, for a by-election, or for a stand-alone vote to be held between general elections.

Electors to vote on a question

236(1) A council may provide for the submission of a question to be voted on by the electors on any matter over which the municipality has jurisdiction.

(2) A vote of the electors under subsection (1) does not bind council.

Section 44 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* requires Council to determine the wording for a vote on a question. However, if Council does not determine wording for a question to be presented to electors, the returning officer must do so.

Form of ballot

44(1) If there is to be a vote on a bylaw or question, the elected authority by resolution

(a) must determine the wording to be used on the ballot, and

(b) may determine the form of the ballot.

(2) If the elected authority does not determine the form of the ballot under subsection (1), the returning officer must do so.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Council approved a \$10,000 budget for citizen communications with regard to these questions. A summary of the communications plan is provided below:

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

1. Do not revise the wording established by Council resolution on May 15, 2017 for the questions to be included on the ballot for the October 16, 2017 municipal general election.

If this alternative were chosen, the wording of the May 15, 2017 Council resolution, as shown above, would appear on the ballot for the October 16, 2017 Municipal General Election.

If Council wishes to pursue this alternative, Administration recommends the following motion:

That the agenda report dated September 5, 2017 entitled "Ballot Questions", be received as information.

The implication of this alternative would be that the residents would not have the most up-to-date cost estimates to base their decision upon, the accuracy of the cost estimates provided would not be known by electors, and the clarity of the plebiscite question, or the results of the vote, may not be easily understood.

2. Update cost estimates, but keep original wording of questions the same.

If Council wishes to pursue this alternative, Administration recommends the following motion:

That the Council Motion CM-17-045 be amended by deleting the three questions in their entirety and replacing them with the following questions:

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:
Branch Library, Building cost: \$19.5 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$1.259 million, Total estimated tax increase: 3.0% Yes _____. No _____.

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:
Single Sheet Arena Ice Rink, Building Cost: \$20.5 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$279,000, Total estimated tax increase: 2.1%. Yes _____. No _____.

Do you support that the City build in next 4 years:
Aquatics Facility, Building Cost: \$13.7 million, Annual Operating Cost: \$310,000, Total Estimated Tax Increase: 1.6% Yes _____. No _____.

The implication of this alternative would be that cost estimates would be known by the electors; however, the accuracy of those estimates would not be known and some electors may not clearly understand the questions.

3. Rescind Council Motion CM-17-045.

If Council wishes to pursue this alternative, Administration recommends the following motion:

That Council Motion CM-17-045, to include three questions on the ballot of the 2017 municipal general election, be rescinded.

The implication of this alternative would be that there would be no vote of the electors on the above capital projects. After the election, the information available to Council when deciding whether to, or

how to, proceed with the proposed capital projects, would not include the results of a vote of electors.

4. Amend the wording of the questions to be included on the ballot of the 2017 municipal general election to provide further options for electors.

Provided as an attachment to this agenda report is additional information on costs associated with alternative models for developing the proposed facilities.

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

City of St. Albert Strategic Plan (Policy C-CG-02) - Pillars of Sustainability:

BUILT ENVIRONMENT - We build our community towards the future to sustain balanced development, with a reverent eye to the past, honouring our unique settlement history and distinct identity.

Governance Strategy

Council is committed to ensuring that the City of St. Albert is a responsive, accountable government that delivers value to the community.

Service Delivery Strategy

Council is committed to ensuring that the City of St. Albert is engaging residents to identify opportunities to improve delivery of services to the community.

Long Term Plans (e.g. MDP, Social Master Plan, Cultural Master Plan, etc.)

List all long-term plans that are connected to, or impacted by, this topic. Add bullets as necessary. Mark "N/A" if no connections exist.

Corporate Objectives (See Corporate Business Plan)

Deliver programs and services that meet or exceed our standards

Exercise strong fiscal management

Ensure our customers are very satisfied

Report Date: September 5, 2017

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Committee/Department: Legislative Services

General Manager: N/A

City Manager: Kevin Scoble